

# **Forget Bull's Blood! Heard about Bikaver?**

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## **1, Motivation**

I come from a winemaking family from Szekszard region in the south of Hungary. To expand my knowledge about wines from all around the world I went to work as a sommelier at The Strathearn Fine Dining Restaurant this then progressed to working at 2 Michelin Starred Restaurant Andrew Fairlie in the well-reputed Hotel Gleneagles 5\*, Scotland.

During this time I have also been exposed to a knowledgeable set of diners who have constantly shown interest for the lesser known terroirs of the world.

I recently launched a British company called, Grapes of Hungary Ltd. My business ethos is to represent a selection of premium wines, including Bikavér, crafted by family owned wineries. I spend at least a week every month to visit the very best restaurants around the UK to show their sommeliers high quality wines we are producing in Hungary today.

## **2, Objective of the thesis**

The objective of the thesis to introduce Premium Bikavér from the Szekszard region, which has recently launched a strict product description to ensure the constant high quality and style. What could be the benefits of the new style of Premium Bikavér or the new product description?

I'm also aiming to discover the possibility of its success within the UK market. What the fine dining customers expecting from a wine?

While I was working as a sommelier I spoke with many suppliers and ascertained that they did not list any Bikavér and showed no interest to do so either. The thesis will also help to find the answer if Bikavér has the chance to shine on the winelists of best restaurants around the UK.

How to communicate it? Is it interesting enough for sommeliers in the UK to list Premium Bikavér, which is trying to step out from the bad reputation created in the time of Communism.

Is it special enough? There are other blends around the world, such as from the Rhone, Bordeaux or Australia's Cabernet-Shiraz. What makes Premium Bikavér unique?

It needs rebranding to find our consumers! Forget about Bull's Blood which we were producing for the Soviet Union in huge quantity and let's introduce Premium Bikavér which we are making today for wine lovers!

## **3, Methodology**

I have studied the new product description of Premium Bikavér from Szekszard using the website: [www.boraszat.kormany.hu](http://www.boraszat.kormany.hu)

I have interviewed all the very best winemakers in the region to collect the most up to date information on how they see the future of Premium Bikavér and asked them why they believe in its success internationally.

I attended the last Bikavér conference and tasting in February 2015 at Takler winery in Szekszard.

I have held a Hungarian Masterclass in Edinburgh for sommeliers from the top restaurants in Scotland. I compiled a questionnaire asking their opinion about Bikavér before the class and after the tasting to see if they would start to list it in their restaurants.

## **4, Content**

The first chapter looks into the history of Bikavér in the Szekszard region.

Bikavér has a bad reputation outside of Hungary. In the time of Communism we were forced to produce quantity rather than quality, which has ruined the image of Bikavér.

The second chapter introduces the current improvements and the recently launched product description of Premium Bikavér from Szekszard, explaining why Bikavér is special for us, the grape varieties we use and also what it can offer. I highlight the main differences between Bull's Blood and Premium Bikavér.

Since the Soviet Union collapse, quality has changed, Premium Bikavér is now the main focus of winemakers in Szekszard. In the 90's we had 4-6 wineries making Bikavér, today we are 21!

The third chapter is summarising my surveys and the feedback about Premium Bikavér I got in the UK.

The final chapter looks at the positive side of a new, strict product description of Premium Bikavér. The higher the quality, and the consistency helps to gain more attention and trust from consumers. We need to invest in marketing to make sure rebranding our Bikavér will gain its success. Joint appearances at wine related events would show how strong the solidarity is among winemakers. Retailers must have Premium Bikavér within their portfolio. Sommeliers will work with it and recommend to their customers around the UK.

## **5. Conclusion**

Sommeliers and suppliers are open minded and interested to work with it. Premium Bikavér has a place in the best restaurants in the UK. The product description can be definitely communicated outside of Hungary and it will also ensure the constant high quality needed.

Marketing is the key for the success. We need to introduce Premium Bikavér as a unique blend, the most important and very high quality red wine from Szekszard!

While I was writing the dissertation I have learned a lot and became even more convinced that Premium Bikavér has a bright future in my wine region and with hard work it will get its well deserved reputation in the future within the UK market.